Don't You Dare Dumb it Down: Supporting High Expectations in Inclusive Classrooms

Whitney Rapp  
*St. John Fisher College, wrapp@sjfc.edu*

Katrina Arndt  
*St. John Fisher College, karndt@sjfc.edu*

Susan Hildenbrand  
*St. John Fisher College, shildenbrand@sjfc.edu*

Susan Schultz  
*St. John Fisher College, sschultz@sjfc.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_facpub](https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_facpub)

Part of the **Education Commons**

**How has open access to Fisher Digital Publications benefited you?**

Publication Information

Rapp, Whitney; Arndt, Katrina; Hildenbrand, Susan; and Schultz, Susan, "Don't You Dare Dumb it Down: Supporting High Expectations in Inclusive Classrooms" (2014). *Education Faculty/Staff Publications*. Paper 17.  
[https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_facpub/17](https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_facpub/17)  
Please note that the Publication Information provides general citation information and may not be appropriate for your discipline. To receive help in creating a citation based on your discipline, please visit [http://libguides.sjfc.edu/citations](http://libguides.sjfc.edu/citations).

This document is posted at [https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_facpub/17](https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_facpub/17) and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at St. John Fisher College. For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjfc.edu.
Don't You Dare Dumb it Down: Supporting High Expectations in Inclusive Classrooms

Abstract
In successful inclusive classrooms, all students, including those with disability labels, are provided with high expectations as well as equitable supports to strive for those expectations. This session describes the theoretical foundation needed to realize successful inclusion for all students and the danger of lowering expectations or limiting supports. Exemplary lessons that respond to the needs of all students in an inclusive setting are shared. At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Identify that the theoretical foundation that best facilitates successful inclusion in diverse classrooms is a combination of high expectations and supports that are highly differentiated and universally designed. 2. Explain that lowering expectations and/or providing insufficient supports are functions of, and reinforce, medical or pity models of disability. 3. Explain that lowering expectations and/or providing insufficient or inappropriate supports negatively impact student success in school as well as transition to adulthood. 4. Share specific strategies for responding to all needs in an inclusive setting, including needs of students with significant disabilities, as well as students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. 5. Implement ways to advocate for inclusion of all students in an inclusive, responsive learning environment without 'dumbing down' the curriculum.

Disciplines
Education

Comments
Presented at the TASH Annual Conference in Washington DC on December 4, 2014.

This conference proceeding is available at Fisher Digital Publications: https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_facpub/17
Don’t You Dare Dumb It Down: Supporting high expectations in inclusive classrooms

Dr. Whitney Rapp
Dr. Katrina Arndt
Dr. Susan Hildenbrand
Dr. Susan Schultz

St. John Fisher College

TASH Conference 2014
Session Objectives

- Discuss theoretical foundations and the impact of each on successful inclusion in diverse classrooms.

- Discuss impact of insufficient or inappropriate supports on transition to adulthood.

- Share specific strategies for responding to all needs in an inclusive setting, including needs of students with significant disabilities, as well as students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

- Share ways to advocate for inclusion of all students in an inclusive, responsive learning environment without ‘dumbing down’ curriculum.
Theoretical Frameworks

- Models of Disability (Rapp & Arndt, 2012)
- Least Dangerous Assumption (Jorgensen, 2005)
- Full Citizenship (Kliewer, 1998)
Disability is...

- Abnormal, sick, illness
- Something that needs to be fixed
- The medical profession is the authority
- This is a problem if/when doctors predict into the future too much: “she will never walk” or “put her in an institution because she will never contribute to your family”
Models of Disability: Pity/Charity Model (Rapp & Arndt, 2012)

- Disability is...
- A terrible fate, something to feel bad about
- Jerry Lewis’ telethon is an example
- Many professionals in special education have this model, maybe without realizing it
Models of Disability: Social Model (Rapp & Arndt, 2012)

- Disability is...
- Not a personal failing
- Part of a range of human diversity

Premises of the social model (Winter, 2003):
1. people with impairments are disabled by society’s failure to accommodate to their needs
2. people with impairments can and should take control of their own lives as much as possible (p. 8)
The least dangerous assumption is a paradigm articulated by Donnellan in 1984.

It states that “in the absence of conclusive data, educational decisions ought to be based on assumptions which, if incorrect, will have the least dangerous effect on the likelihood that students will be able to function independently as adults” (Jorgensen, 2005, p. 1).
Expectations/Support Framework

(Rapp, 2014, Working draft. Do not copy or cite)

High Expectations/
Low Support
- Mainstreaming
- Aliens/Squatters
- Medical Model
- Some Students Have to Prove They Can Learn
- Disability = General Inability (so they're out)

High Expectations/
High Support
- Full inclusion
- Citizens
- Social Model of Disability
- All Students Can Learn
- Disability = Challenge, Opportunity, Difference

Low Expectations/
Low Support
- Exclusion
- Aliens
- Some Students Can Learn
- Disability = Bad, Scary

Low Expectations/
High Support
- Segregation
- Squatters
- Pity/Charity Model
- Some Students Can Learn
- Disability = General Inability (so typical peers must help)
- Doing For, Not Providing For
High Expectations/Low Support

- Mainstreaming
- Aliens/Squatters
- Medical Model
- Some Students Have to Prove They Can Learn
- Disability = General Inability (so they're out)
Low Expectations/Low Support

- Exclusion
- Aliens
- Some Students Can Learn
- Disability = Bad, Scary
Low Expectations/High Support

- Segregation
- Squatters
- Pity/Charity Model
- Some Students Can Learn
- Disability = General Inability (so typical peers must help)
- Doing For, Not Providing For
High Expectations/High Support

- Full inclusion
- Citizens
- Social Model of Disability
- All Students Can Learn
- Disability = Challenge, Opportunity, Difference
Strategy - Response to Intervention
High Expectations, High Support

**Academic Systems**

- **Intensive, Individual Interventions**
  - Individual Students
  - Assessment-based
  - High Intensity

- **Targeted Group Interventions**
  - Some students (at-risk)
  - High efficiency
  - Rapid response

- **Universal Interventions**
  - All students
  - Preventive, proactive

**Behavioral Systems**

- **Intensive, Individual Interventions**
  - Individual Students
  - Assessment-based
  - Intense, durable procedures

- **Targeted Group Interventions**
  - Some students (at-risk)
  - High efficiency
  - Rapid response

- **Universal Interventions**
  - All settings, all students
  - Preventive, proactive
Strategy and Support Resources

SWIFT Schools
http://www.swiftschools.org/

Intervention Central
http://www.interventioncentral.org/

CAST – Universal Design for Learning
http://www.cast.org/about/index.html
Strategy and Support Resources

FROM Tutor Scripts to Talking Sticks

100 Ways to Differentiate Instruction in K-12 Inclusive Classrooms

Paula Flath, Sheila Dumbar

Universal Design for Learning in Action

100 WAYS to Teach All Learners

Whitney M. Rapp
Transition to Adulthood

- Why do some students succeed and others do not?

- Evidence-based research tells us:
  - Need to set specific goals.
  - An example - Jake’s transition plan:
    - Jake will live independently or in a supervised setting
    - Jake will work or go to college

Too generic, conflicting options within goals

It all starts with the transition plan
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Populations

- Culturally responsive planning
  - Perspective of family culture, characteristics, values and experiences
  - Respond to diversity
    - Appreciate and incorporate the culture that exists outside of school
    - Make connections between school, home and community
    - Language of school and work
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Populations

- Be careful of unintended or unexpected bias, stereotypes and generalizations.
  - Understand personal identities, experiences of the individual and the family.
  - Make sure everyone has access to information
  - Build on cultural and social capital

Universal design in transition planning:
Embrace differences, differentiated to meet individual preferences, strengths and needs.
Person Centered Planning

- Strengths and skills
- Decision making/ freedom to make choices
- Self Determination
- Work ethic
- Self Advocacy
- Connections between home, school and community
- Transportation
Vocational Competence

- Early school and work experiences shape future opportunities for:
  - Competitive employment?
  - Supportive employment?
  - Customized employment?

For many students with disabilities, opportunities are elusive.

Without opportunities, students with disabilities do not have the chance to practice these skills.
Action Plan

• What is my plan?
• What skills do I need? What can I do to learn what I don’t know? (Targeted instruction).
• What might be a barrier? What can I do to remove these barriers?
• Timelines
• Do I need to adjust my plan or timelines?
Post-secondary Education

- Plan for success
  - Support in place, just in case!
  - Ask for feedback
  - Expectation that you will function without direct parental involvement/privacy laws
  - Complete the loop, every semester
  - Own your education

- 2 year and 4 year degrees do not have to be limited to 2 years and 4 years.
Social experiences at school and/or work

- Stay off your phone during orientations

- Join a club (social and/or major related at school) and participate in school and work social events

- Attend planned social events or activities
Yikes!
References

Contact Information

- karndt@sjfc.edu
- shildenbrand@sjfc.edu
- sschultz@sjfc.edu
- wrapp@sjfc.edu